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AN EXPEDIENT OR A sure & easy way of *Reducing* all *Dissenters* whatsoever to an exact & sincere *Obedience* both to our *Ecclesiastical* & *Civil Government*.

AMong all the great nations that have been, no man I believe can show me the example of *England*, which being not only still intire under the Rule of its lawful Governour, but also a great deal stronger in it self, by the happy conjunction of *Scotland* (its former dangerous enemy] should nevertheless since the *Reformation* be *de facto* much weaker, and consequently less considerable to our *Neighbours*.

All *English men*, of what persuasion or interest soever, unanimously conclude that our differences in *Religion* are the cause; & therefore as some of every *Opinion* have proposed their *Expedients* for the cure of this misfortune, so I hope I may take the same Liberty, & throw in my mite also, being induc'd thereunto by the affection I bear my Countrey, which I suppose moved the rest, that have already written: and though I am born a *Member* of the *Church of England*, whose *Liturgy* & *Rites* are so worthy of admiration, yet I shall do what I can (as far as 'tis lawful) to bridle in my *Zeal*, least seeming too partial, I should rather harden than mollifie our *dissenting Brethren*, who happen (which is the misery of it) to be too numerous & considerable in this poor distracted *Nation*.

We all know that the whole Kingdom as to *Divine Worship* is divided (besides its subdivisions) into these four great Parties, *viz.* *Church of England men*, *Presbyterians*, *Independants* & *Papists*; the three last of which we call *Nonconformists*, as contrary to the present Religion establish'd.

Our *Church of England* is more numerous than any, & has persons in it of all ranks & conditions; but it seems not so full of *Zeal* as the others, because it abounds with men that are too much in love with humane Interest, or have no Religion at all; for these ever flock to that *Church* which is in power; whether true or false.

Presbyterians have generally on their side the *Corporations*, & all formal men, which they are pleas'd to call the *sober part of the Nation*, but

but as they are rich, ſo they lye more open to be haraſs'd, whenſoever the black day of tribulation happen's.

The *Independants* or *Phanatiques* conſiſt only in *Artizans*, & the meaneſt of the Land, & yet are in two things very conſiderable; as firſt, let the *Government* do what it will with them they cannot be much poorer, ſo that in three months they will recover, & be as they were; In the next place, Their *crafts* & *trades* are of great concernment to us.

Of *Papiſts* there are ſeven parts of ten Gentlemen & people of great quality, & therefore they fancy that their Religion is probably the trueſt, becauſe it has been profeſs'd here all along by ſo many men of parts & faſhion; & boaſt that it is only through Ignorance, or want of attention that the whole Nation is not as blind as themſelves. As for *Perſecution* they are not much terrified at it, having (as they believe) manfully endur'd it ſo many years; beſides by long practice they know not only all the wayes imaginable to evade the penalties of the *Laws*, but alſo by their birth have Relations in all offices, & employments, that alwayes did, & ſtill do help them when they are in danger to be whipt by us.

This then in three words being the *intereſt* and *ſtate* of each party, we may the eaſier find out a *Remedy* for our *diſorders*, which have ruin'd, or at beſt ſtrangely ſhatter'd one of the moſt flouriſhing *Kingdomes* in the world.

Ever ſince the *happy Reſtauration of his Majeſty*, there has been ſtill a great cry in all quarters for *Liberty of Conſcience*, to which I have been greatly inclind, not only out of compaſſion to well meaning deluded ſouls, but out of conviction alſo that it would totally root out all *Sects*, & erronious *Opinions* from among us: & ſeeing we have found by experience that *ſeverity* has neither deſtroy'd *Popery*, which is ſo ridiculous to every body but its Profeſſours: nor yet prevented a troubleſome brood of our own, I ſay conſidering this, we ought to try what *mildneſſe* will effect, ſince all wiſe men alter thoſe projects which they find deficient: at leaſt we may make tryal of it for a while, as our matchleſſe *Parliaments* do, that enact often Laws to continue but for ſo long, to be the better able to ſee whether they may reap the propoſed advantage by them; Nor can this tryal be any wayes prejudicial to us, if it endanger neither the ſouls of men, nor cauſe a diſturbance in the *Civil Government*.

'*Tis impoſſible*, (according to the profeſſion of all our moſt learned *Proteſtants*) *to hazard our Salvation by Opinions whilſt we agree in that maine Fundamental*, to wit, *The ſatisfaction of our Saviour Jeſus Chriſt*; for

others

otherwise we must shipwrack our selves, whether we will or no, on the unavoidable rocks of *Popery*; because if there should yet be any thing more, which we are necessarily to believe, an *infallible interpreter*, and *Magisterial Iudge* to guide the ignorant & unlearned would consequently follow; *Magisterial* I say, because a poor simple man must implicitely believe, as not being ever able to comprehend or understand some truths; & *infallible*, least men might be still doubting whether yet they are in the right or no.

No marvel then that *Mr. Chillingworth* (the miracle of his age) sticks close to this, thinking it very strange a man should be damn'd for notions which he cannot comprehend; & therefore lays down *Repentance from dead works, and a belief in the coming & merits of Christ*, as the only *Fundamental* amongst *Christians*, & as a thing adequate to every ordinary capacity. The *Papists* who would fain come near our truths, are also nibb'ing here though they handle it another way; for they will have it too, *That all men are damn'd through their own wilfulness in resisting evident things*, & say, *Though Christ as a Prophet sent from God may be easily conceived by humane Reason, yet an infallible Church to govern his flock is easier comprehended and easier demonstrated to a Christian, than his being sent can be proved to an Infidel*, & so forsooth this *infallible Church* by its *definitions*, and *explications* makes the hardest *mysteries* as easie as the plainest.

I here set down this pretty *Doctrine* dress'd after the *Roman fashion*, to show, that if a *Protestant* should not ground damnation on our wilfulness in rejecting things within the reach of our capacity, the very *Papists* themselves will rise up in judgement against him at the last day, to his utter confusion and shame.

This *moderation* the eminent *Doctor Taylor* himself highly esteem'd, & this he so stoutly maintain'd in his book of *Liberty of Prophecying*, that to this day it remains unanswer'd. Many enemies I know he created to himself by his reconciling *zeal*, & though by their cry he passes at present for a better *practical* than *controversial Divine*, yet he has (as all men acknowledge) made it evidently appear inconsistent with *Protestant charity* to damn any of our poor *Dissenters* for their *tenets*.

For first, can any godly *Protestant* thinke a *Presbiterian* a limme of Satan for refusing to conform to *habits & ceremonies*, which every body confesses were neither comanded by Christ, nor his Apostles: or shall he be reprobated for railing against stage playes though the drift of the best of them is to abuse the *Brethren*? Nor can the disowning of *Episcopacy* be damnable, unless we submit our selves to *Tradition*, and *Ecclesiastical authority*, for the *Scripture* has many seeming arguments for

that opinion. *Predestination*, & the manner of Christs descent into Hell are points disputable among all *Christians*, & *God* forbid we should think that every error in judgement will deprive us of all happinesse hereafter.

The *Independants* or *Phanatiques*, owe their being to the foregoing *Sect*, & if they wildly fancy a barn as good as a Church, or a Graduate, not so learned as a Cobler; with other odd extravigancies (the half of which no one man can recount) let us not be more rigorous than the *Pope*, who only lookt upon them that came to *Rome* to convert him as mad; & I think neither S. *Peter*, nor his pretended Successors have lockt Bedlams out of Heaven.

Nor shall I damn *Papists* for matters of Faith, whilst they believe the *Trinity*, & can patch up their other *Doctrines*, so as not really to intend thereby the dishonour of our great *Lord* & *Master*. For (as I said before) *God* forbid every errour in judgment should be a sin to death.

They fancy many promises in *Scripture*, *That the Church shall never erre. That it is to be visible in prosperity & adversity as a Judge in all disputes that arise*, & laugh at *Protestants* for affirming that the *Scriptures* are easie seeing all *Sects* among us quote Scripture for what they hold, & yet one is often quite opposite to the tenets of the other in things of the highest nature.

They preach up *merits* (they say) to encourage men to work; but tell us expressly (when we urge to them the foulness of the *tenet*) *That neither their own actions, nor the actions of any Saint can be in themselves sufficient to bring them to heaven, did not God promise to accept them as meritorious*, and *sufficient by the superabounding merits of Christ.*

They honour Saints (they say) *only because they were faithfull servants of Christ*, and believe, *That these holy Spirits, must needs know our wants by their rejoycing in heaven at our conversion*, & *That their prayers for us are much more powerful with God*, than *those of our friends here below*, which we all often implore: yet they oblige none (as they pretend) to pray to *Saints* except they will.

They think *because some sins* (*viz.* those against the *Holy Ghost*) *shall not be forgiven in this world nor in the world to come, that other sins may some times be forgiven in the world to come.* And therefore *pray for the dead* (*that have built upon hay stubble & other imperfect things*) whom S. *Paul* to the *Corinthians* declares (they say) shall be saved *so as by fire.* & they more firmly also believe this *Purgatory* because, the *Maccabees* (*that fought for the maintenance of God's law*) *pray'd for their slain Brethren*; which

which they often urge is recorded by an unquenchable *Historian*, if not by a *Divine Writer*:

As to their *Idolatry* in the *Sacrament*, they say, *That by believing Christ really there 'tis him they worship, & not a piece of bread. That the thing is no lesse possible according to humane reason than the Trinity: That the words*, THIS IS MY BODY are as plain, as THERE ARE THREE THAT BEAR RECORD IN HEAVEN; & *That* it is much for their advantage, that all sects of *Christians* in the world grant the *Real Presence*, except a few *Calvinists* as they call them.

By that text of *Scripture*, *Confesse your sins one to another*. They think their *Confession* enjoyn'd; and that *Christ's* commission to his Disciples *to bind & to loose* authorizes their Priests *Absolutions* and *Interdictions*. And before many of their books of *Pilgrimages*, *Reliques*, *Pictures*, & the like (to show their worship is relative) they print this piece of *Saint Jerom's* Epistle against *Vigilantius*. „ *We honour the Reliques of Martyrs*, „ *to render adoration to him for the love of whom they were Martyrs*, *we* „ *honour the servants, that what we do for their service may be refer'd to their* „ *Master, who says, He that receives you receives me.*

I should never have done, were I to set down all their *opinions*, & *Jesuiticall* glosses, but this I may say for them, that they have much lesse to answer, since they really think themselves in the right, & are so united in their *Fundamentalls*, whilst the poor *Protestants* (to the great shame & weakening of the *common cause*) quarrell irreconcileably about nicetyes, & then divide & subdivide without end.

Far be it therefore from us to damne these *Papists* though *ignorant*, especially seeing, we must do the like then to the *Lutherns*, who are not only *Protestants* but the first *Reformers* also: for their Churches are cram'd with *Crucifixes*, & *Pictures*; and which is more, they as really believe *Christ* in the *Sacrament*, as the Pope himself; the *main point* in which he & his brood commit *Idolatry*, as the *Church of England* and the other best *reform'd Churches* hold.

Let not therefore our passion shut up heaven against any to whom our *Saviour* has open'd it; & since *Protestants* themselves do so disagree (as sometimes each man in a family is of a different Church) let us be the more charitable in our censures, according to the healing advice of many a painful *Divine*; and thus may the *Papists* be baffled with their own distinction, *viz.*; *That they differ in school points only, & not in fundamentalls.*

But here I desire not to be misunderstood, for I hold many other Doctrines extremely advantageous to poor souls, and heartily wish all men of my opinion, but nothing but time and new methods can unite us without the utter ruine of the *Nation*.

Having thus like a good *Protestant* prov'd, That *Indulgence* to *dissenters* though (they should encrease by it, as some vainly fancy) cannot hinder their *salvation*, because all that do well may be saved; I will now come to the *civil Government*, & show you that it will be so far from causing *disturbances*, or endangering the *true Religion* that in ten years there shall not be a *dissenter* left to pisse against the wall; & this I hope (if practicable) must satisfy even those, that limite *God's mercy*, especially since they know how firmly sects are already rooted here, & could never be extirpated by the severity of our *Laws*.

I have often laugh'd to hear persons of each *Sect* among us pretend that their Religion teaches nothing but *obedience* to Magistrates, whilst all others foment *Rebellion*. Now for my part I would absolutely trust no Religion in the world with the full power of deposing Princes, no more than I would have an *Infidel* trust his wife in bed with me because I am a *Christian*. 'Tis most certain that the true religion of *Christ*, comands as well and exact *obedience* to our *Rulers*, as that we should not *commit adultery*; but yet whilst men are men, many of the Professors of this truth (what by the force of a partial appetite, & self *interesse'd* distinctions) when they have oppertunity, often transgress those two precepts, though as positively command as can be: & therefore some doubt whether all the *Primitive Christians* would have been so patient under *Nero*, *Domitian*, *Diocletian*, *&c.* had they had power enough to contend: Nor will I more passe my word that the *Grand Segnior* should continue *Emperour* & *Mahometan*, were the sword wholly in the hands of his *Christian* subjects, than that all the members of the *Church of England* would have submitted to our present *Monarch*, had he yeilded to the *Papists*, who were as busy (they say) as Bees to convert him.

All men whatsoever affect to have their Prince of their Religion, because they fancy it most for the glory of *God*, but nothing heightens this *zeal* so much as *persecution*; for whensoever there is difficulty of obtaining our will, the desire of enjoyment encreases; as we see even in women that often risque life, fortune, honour, & all to enjoy a *Gallant*, when as if they afterwards marry (& then there will be no need of comming in by the window) 'tis a thousand to one but they presently loath each others conversation, & bed. Besides this natural proneness to pursue what is hindred us (for *passions* often bear sway even in our spiritual actions) self preservation also or the hopes to be quiet puts the brains of *dissenters* upon propagating their Religion; nor is it a small argument to many of the truth of a new *Doctrine*, to see men suffer for it.

This we have experimentally seen here at home in every party that

now

now contends with the *Church*; for what could be more irresistable than *Presbytery* in the beginning of the late war; & how many men, women, & children, would have willingly ventur'd their lives for the *Cause* whilst kept under? & yet within three years or thereabouts after it's establishment, 'twas kick'd down even by those who had before set it up with such *zeal* & *hazard*.

Phanaticisme (as well mankind inlightned with the last spark of reason will acknowledge) has no greater enemy than it self, nor ever did, nor ever can stand, because it wants all *principles* of *settlement*; & therefore 'tis we that blow the party into some appearance of *unity*, in hoping by disturbance to hasten their ruine.

As for *Popery*, let us consider it in *Queen Elizabeths* time, & we shall find in our *Protestant Historians* that for the first ten years of her reign no man as a *Papist* suffered either in his life, or Estate, & yet from a handful the *Reform'd* became much more than half the *Kingdom*: but after that the Government began to enact *sanguinary* & penal Laws we find that *Allen*, *Philopater*, & the rest of their active Writers insisted upon no argument more (to prove the truth of their Religion) than that *Protestants* of all sorts became daily *Papists*, but not one in 7. years left them, except some scandalous fellow which was a greater advantage than losse to them.

Let us look in the next place on their *Jesuiticall* Seminaries at *Douay* & *Saint Omers*, & you shall find them (as knowing men have assur'd me) much emptier now they can carry *popish* Children over with little danger, than in the former dayes, when it was done by great bribes, & they often indited for fugitives also.

Again if we reflect upon our *late Rebellion*, it was called by many (as I well remember) the *popes harvest*, & *Halcyon dayes*; & yet we know they lost besides others of note, two *Marquesses* at a clap (I mean the heirs apparent of *Winchester*, & *Worcester*) the like of which cannot be paralleld in the greatest severities of the *Queen*, nor in the violent storme that universally fell after the *Powder Treason*.

Lastly, concerning *Proclamations* & the like, what man ever found the least good by them? If there be any thing got, the Priests are the gainers: for (every body say's) not one stir's out of *England*, & 'tis likely also by being in a seeming kind of danger, that they are the more caress'd by their *Penitents*. Nay if all things were well examin'd, we shall find that the *Protestants* themselves do ever pitty them in distress, & that there are never more *conversions* than in the height of these pudders, which 'tis no

wonder

wonder if they enter into their *Annalls* as *Perſecutions*.

If *puniſhment* then ſerves only to encreaſe the number of *Sectaries*, why ſhould we be ſo much their friends, and do them courteſies to be rayl'd at for our pains? *Courteſies* I ſay, becauſe their *Domine* or *Godly Paſtor* would otherwiſe ſtarve, whereas now there's nothing thought too good for him; and the flock then would have alſo leiſure to conſider their extravigance, which now the *pleaſure* of being *haraſs'd* hinders. No *Cavaliers* will wonder at my joyning the word *pleaſure* to *haraſſing*, ſince I dare ſay there are not any of thoſe great and loyal ſubjects, though they now poſſeſſe places ſuitable to their merits, but had formerly more ſatisfaction in one poor play by ſtealth at *Haynes's*, in one meeting at *Doctor Gunning's* in danger, or in contriving any half Moon-plot over a pint of ſack, than ever they enjoyed (as to their own particular) ſince the abſolute eſtabliſhment of his *Majeſty*.

This is the nature of fraile man, and if the beſt and wiſeſt of men cool a little by enjoyment, what muſt they do that have no other guide but *paſſion*.

I wiſh then that our *Sectaries* had *churches* allowed them, & all the *priviledges of their brith right* as they call it; nor am I yet their Advocate, but the Nation's, as hoping to preſerve it's Inhabitants & deſtroy their fooliſh blind *Zeal*, which has been ſo fatal to us.

Their *Churches* or *Congregations* I would have under penalty publique & regiſter'd, which hath nothing of particularity in it, ſeeing all the *Churches* in the Kingdom are ſo. By this means his *Majeſty* would know their *perſons*, *manners*, & *Doctrine*, which now by their meeting in holes, he is wholly unacquainted with; & if any man then ſpake in the leaſt againſt the Government, he ſhould be made an Example with all the ſoverity that could be thought of.

I have heard ſay that in *Holland* (where no Religion is unwelcome if any Miniſter in his ſermon, or other ſpiritual function, meddles with *ſtate affairs*, the Magiſtrates ſend him next day a pair of ſhoos to carry him forthwith out of the Province; & preſently he provides for his march, otherwiſe he is ſure to be hang'd unlamented; nor do they ever touch more than the *offender*, which proceed's not ſo much from *juſtice* or *Compaſſion*, as *Prudence*; it being certain no penalty can ſo ſurely tye up an Incendiary's tongue as (when he ſuffers) not to be pitied by his Party.

For to puniſh the whole *Body* (as the Engliſh cuſtome is) for the faults

faults of some *members*, makes them all desperate, racking many times their brain to defend an action (the then *common cause* which otherwise they would have disown'd, without difficulty; and besides it is a kind of real martyrdom when a man actually suffers either in his life or estate, for a crime which perchance strictly and truly he abominates.

No wonder then, that our *Papists* not only reckon themselves *Martyrs*, but are eryd up & esteemd for such by so many Forrain Princes; which must needs draw a scandal upon the *Nation*, & so do the *Protestant Religion* a prejudice both at home and abroad, if these encrease, and gain repute also by their sufferings. I cannot therefore but be highly dissatisfied with our *common Justice*, which entails Rebellion on a *Sect*, and insulting too much over the weaknesses of mankind, necessarily (as it were) inclines from Father to son unprincipled men to all villany and treason.

Let us therefore call to mind the *Scotch Presbyterian Rebellion* in 66 last, and see what a ruine it would have been to *England*, had his *Majesty* instead of his own great *prudence* and merciful temper followed their councel who thought it fit to pursue our *presbyterians* at home, as complotters with those actually in arms. This would have driven all into the utmost despair, especially those that loved the *King* and *Kingdom* best; for then they would have deem'd it impossible to satisfie, & consequently thought ill designs the best of their play, nor would they have lookt upon themselves or children otherwise than slaves, since no slavery is equal to that, of being always suspected by the Government. Many that are now faithful, would then have been not only incensed, but perchance have turnd their *bibles* over and over to find again arguments to maintain Rebellion; for what will not men fancy *God* sayes when tis absolutely necessary for their ends.

Were every man that now heartily rejoyces at a Thiefs execution at *Tyburn*, to suffer with the malefactor, we should not only see *theft* defended by its present condemners, but reckond for a *virtue* also. Some would cry up the life of man for an inestimable jewel, and to be preferred before all worldly trash. Others would term *propriety*, *a tyranniçe*, & *unjust usurpation*, with the like metaphysical fancies, nay the tricks of a Rascal would be then called the effect of a dextrous wit, & the setting upon two or three unarmed Gaugers, the height of all valour and courage.

Theres nothing can ever destroy us in *England* but disagreement, nor shall the Government ever fail of being thought the common enemy by all *Nonconformists*, whilst the folly or knavery of some few is imputed to the whole gang in general.

If this way of proceeding were lay'd aside (which now strongly cements them) their *Congregations* would quickly be well satisfied with

the condemnation of a guilty *Member*, as we ordinarily are at what passes at the *old Bayly*, or at any of our other *Sessions*. It may be some might strive to mince the matter of fact (as daily friends do in all faults committed) but none would then defend a crime to be no crime, which is the thing I solely insist upon, for from thence arise all our disputes & factions.

'Tis an *error* to think there can be a great *Body* of men inconsistent with Government, since to be lawless is as opposite to the nature of mankind in general, as death it self. Every sober man therefore (let his Religion be what it will) find's out some distinction or other to prevent confusion, & to conform to Laws that tend to Government. The *Presbyterians* are too discreet & rich to be *anarchical*: & whosoever has, & loves riches, will be always fond of Laws that preserve his right to them The *Phanatiques* are generally harmless & well meaning; & though a *Quaker* will not set out his Tithes, he will bid the *Minister* or *Tithing man* take them: nay if he find loss by their carving, he will at length do it himself with this or the like salvo, that *'Tis the old man & not the new that payes the Hireling that Judaical abomination*: nor do these poor people refuse (it seems) to engage to live peaceably, as their friend Mr. Penn tells us in his *Great Case*. Now for the *Papists*, the greatest & most absolute Princes of the World are not only of their profession, but our own Kingdom also was extremely considerable under their *Governors*, & our excellent Laws and prudent old customes were of their framing; as they well know, & also vaunt in their late *Apology* & *Reply*.

Besides though the *Papists* of *England* are still so great Assertors of the *Popes* power in *Spirituals*, that I really believe by what I have read & seen that there would more die for him here, then in any two Countreys in the world, yet we know that in the very depth of *Popery* no body struck more bold & home at all temporal encroachments of the *Romish See*, than the *English*, for they not only made strict prohibitions against the *coming in of Legates* without leave against *publication of bulls*, and the like; but also enacted those nipping Laws of *Mortmain*, so that no body could voluntarily & of his own head give one foot of Land to the *Church*, Nor at this day do I find, (for truly I have made particular enquiry about it) any French man more willing than our present *Papists* to tye up the *Popes* hands from medling with the *civil Government* of the Kingdom.

If therefor all or any of these *Dissenters* be now heaving at the *Government*, 'tis because they are distinguish'd from the rest of the *Nation*, & made as uncapable of many things as strangers & aliens; nor do's animosity or a rebellious spirit always proceed from the Religion men profess but from the frailty of nature which makes them often partial, & take the dictates of their appetite for truth & reason. Now were no *English Christian* (as long as obedient to the lawful *power*) inconvenienc'd for his *Con-*

science,'tis impossible but *Sectaries* would be as heartily sollicitous for the good of the *Nation*, as any man else whatsoever.

This most evidently appears by the *Welsh*, who (whilst we suspected & used them with rigor) were ever unquiet, & our most dead y enemies, but after we had recieved them as friends, & made them partakers of all the *priviledges* of the Kingdom, they not only forgot *our strange usage of their Princes the loss of their Lands, & the Egyptian slavery* they were under but so united themselves with us, that our losses are now theirs, & theirs ours; nor have they since ever stirr'd or made ill use of our favours; but (on the contrary by them, both they and we are become *one people, & one nation* without the least rancour, or grudge; nay so fond have they been of our *Monarchy* (which once they hated above all things) that four parts of five of them were faithful to his *late Majesty*, whilst such a number of *English* were up against him. If then *gentleness* & *interest* could reconcile long feuds, & make men from mortal foes become the greatest friends why may not we expect by the like method the like success in these our present distractions?

Ther's one *argument* (as 'tis thought) of great weight against this *liberty of Conscience*, viz. *That all dissenters when they were in power would tole rate no Religion but their own*, (as the *Papists* in time past, & the *Protestant Sectaries* in the late rebellion) & therefore in *Justice* they ought now to be served in the same manner. The matter of *fact* is granted & taken out of their sermons I know, yet nevertheless if persecuting *Christians* for *conscience* be in it self against *charity*, we must not retaliate, & render like for like, but on the other side, if the *lawful Magistrate* may punish *tender consciences* when he thinks it for the honor of *God*, & quiet of the Government, this may perchance a little touch the *Presbyterians* & *Phanatiques* (who were our Rulers by indirect means) but then we can never blame any longer the *Papists* for what they did, because their Goverment (as to its Jurisdiction) was as lawful as ours, & their *plea* consequently unanswerable, *viz.*, That they really *fancy'd their Religion true, & the Protestant heretical; That they thought it would for ever distract & disquiet the nation to permit new Doctrines* & in short, *That they proceeded according to Magna Charta, & other Laws enacted by the legal Authority of the Kingdom.*

No man can therefore better defend the *Marian days*, & all *Popish severity*, than by advising the punishment of *Non-conformists*, & practising it as we do. But if we would have the *Church of England's* great beauty appear, & be the *true spouse without spot or wrinkle*, we must necessarily refrain from doing those things, which they whom we blame are deem'd guilty of.

It is pleasant to see now a days how *Presbyterians, Independants & Papists*, (though really no great friends) begin to claw one another: & who

can blame them for it, or would not think them otherwise fools, since they all lye under the same lash?

I remember when *Dr. Hewet* was to be executed, our *Church of England* & *City Divines* joyn'd together (though they hated one another sufficiently) to petition *Cromwel* for him; at which some persons of quality wondring one night at *Dr. Duns*, *Sr. Henry Blunt* answerd, that he thought there was nothing extraordinary in that action; for (said he) I have near my house a *Common* where my pigs, & my neighbours feed, & there I dayly see that they eagerly fight & bite one another at the trough, But if a dog happens to fall upon any one, the rest will presently take the part of the oppress'd with all the zeal and fury imaginable.

'Tis certain both *Greek* & *Trojan* will unite when they find it their interest to do it, & what greater interest can any man have, than the good of his *Country*, if he be capible of participating of all the advantages that accrue. I do not therefore infer that presently a *Quaker* must be made *Master of the Ceremonies*, or *Revels*, but that if he can dance, & put of his hat with as good a grace as another, he should not loose the hopes of these places by reason of his Religion; for though thousands will never emerge but be beggars and Tinkers, should all our *Colliers* be fraught'd with Gold, yet these very contemptible men would think the *Government* uneasie, and perchance wish its ruine; were they by *Act* of *Parliament* never to rise to any higher pitch.

Were we all of one *opinion*, no man should be more willing to keep out Sects than my self; for then 'twould be both feasible and lawful; but since things are come to this height, 'tis now impossible to do it by *severity*, for all violent courses will only exasperate more than half our subj. & cause many to catch at all seditious opportunities that shall at any time occur.

But some men (like *Justice Overdoe*) must be punishing, for otherwise they fancy all *Discipline* lost; & therefore of such I would fain know, since all *Dissenters* cannot in *Prudence* be brought to the ring, which of them would they bate had they power?

To fall foul on the *Presbyterians* would be madness, for who would not deem that action so, which must needs provoke a *Church*, a *prudent*, & a *numerous Party* to be eternal enemies to the Government, & yet no *Protestant* can call their errors in Faith, damnable. They once err'd we know, but this may be a means to make their children also faulty; & truly I doubt not but the miseries they at last suffer'd in the *late Rebellion*, (for wealthy men must smart in such disorders) will cause them to be for the future *faithful Englishmen*, unless new *exasperations* pervert both their *resolution* & *ease*.

Twere pity also, methinks to be always punishing *Phanatiques*, who rather want a good *Poisitian*, & *Cephaliques*, than the *authority* of a *Constable*.

I am sure (as I said before) it makes them more obstinate, as fancying themselves like the *primitive Christians*, whilst the *Hollanders* grow rich by our losses, affording them that quiet which they find not at home, & thereby become masters of those *manufactures* which formerly we *alone* could brag of.

Or shall we then vent our fury against *Papists*, & make our selves still ridiculous to our *neighbouring Princes*, who receiving odd accounts from their Agents, think us a weak people & easy to be distracted by vain fears & jealousies? Nor can it certainly be for the good or honour of the Nation, to persecute those, who have shewed so much *loyalty*, that no race of men could ever parallel them unless the true *Members* of the *Church of England*; & that which makes me yet more their friend, is that at present (though we have often provokt them) they keep no *private caballing* with either *France*, *Spain*, *Pope*, *Devil*, or any thing that is ill (for had they done it we should have smelt it out long a go) but on the contrary, they have ever the *King* in their mouths, as if the *Rump* were now on foot, and express as much grief at our *publique misfortunes* as any other *Subject* in the *Nation*.

I defie all their *Priests* & *Fryers* to alter my principles in Religion, yet I do acknowledge their *Church* to be a *Church* as our learned *Prelates* & *Divines* have taught me; nor can I but decrie those that will damn our *great Grand-fathers*, & consequently all before them; for I am sure every body then were *Papists* with a vengeance, unless sometimes two or three foolish *Lollards* started up, who were far liker the *Disciples* of *Fox* & *Naylor*, than *Members* of the true *Protestant Religion*.

Away then with persecuting *Christians* purely for *Conscience*, which is the only *hadvest* for *Knaves*, & of this here at home we have two most woful examples; For neither had the *Head* of our *long Rebellion* been so powerfully assisted at first, could their *zealous abettors* have been assured of their Religion, Nor was it ever possible for *Cromwel* to have raisd himself to that pitch he was in, but by laying hold on the *tender Consciences* of men, who despairing of favour from a lawfuler *Government*, became at last *bands* to his *ambition*, & then shar'd with him in that rich & plentyful booty,

Away I say, with this *persecution*, the chief cause also of so must *Atheisme* amongstus; for men who want courage to suffer, by sinning often against their *Consciences*, become hardned in time, & in stead of ever really approving the Religion imposd think every thing at last a meer cheat, & so from harmless people erroniusit may be at first in points of small concernment) grow fixt by degrees in all *infidelity* & *prophaneness*; nor has any one thing been more destructive to our Government than so many *Oaths*, for most that were truly ill men never scrupled the taking of them when as *Dissenters* that stood on *Principles* have always refus'd them & ostenti-

times ſmartly ſuffer'd for it. Thus the *beſt* fall only within reach of the *laws*, whilſt the moſt *factious* & *dangerous* (againſt whom thoſe very *laws* were intended) eſcape their deſerved puniſhment.

I profeſs to the whole world I have no inclination to the *Religion* of our *Sectaries*, but their *perſons*; who being ſo numerous can never be miſus'd without an unſpeakable inconvenience to us all, & though I have been a *Cavalier* (I thank *God*) ever ſince the name came up (& to this day dote upon any thing that truly was of the *party*) yet I have laid aſide all animoſity againſt our old enemies, becauſe I am ſure it is for the intereſt now of that *Prince* whoſe *Rights* we all heretofore ſo eagerly aſſerted.

As Rebels againſt the *State* muſt be pardon'd whenſoever they are many, even ſo we muſt do with *Diſſenters* in Religion, for though the executing of three or four Traytors may be *Juſtice*, yet to hang up many millions, would be termed *cruelty* let the *fact* be what it will.

Let there be a *general Toleration*, for unleſs it be general we ſhall never be at reſt, but furniſh *knaves* ſtill (as I ſaid before) with advantages to couſin poor people, & provoke them (being once deluded) to kick againſt their *lawful Magiſtrate*.

Let *Presbyterians* whine their fill, & tell us of *Soulſaving-ſending homecomforts*; let *Phanatiques* ſigh till they be in earneſt; & let *Papiſts* tire themſelves with their *Pater noſters* & *Ave Maries*, & then I am ſure they will all of them ſoon find the honour & welfare of their *Country* to be their only *intereſt*. Nor is there danger that the bare hopes of recovering the *publick Lands* they once bought in the late *civil War*, will make the *Body* of *Phanatiques* fond of alterations; ſince they very well know, let what changes ſoever happen (which *God* in his mercy defend us always from) the *new Adventures* will get the prey to themſelves, for that muſt be proportioned to each Actor, according to what he *then* do's, & not to what he or his father *formerly* did: but though by rebellion they can have no aſſurance of reenjoying their old ſilly purchaſes, or any temporal gain more than other new partizans, yet all of them are ſure that *Liberty of Conſcience* will be granted them from the firſt, what faction ſoever takes up arms againſt the King, which muſt needs make even quiet *Sectaries* greedy to hear of inſurrections & broils. How eaſily therefore will *Toleration* hinder this natural tendency, & how neceſſary are the means of preventing ſuch an ill? for *woe* be to that country to ſo great a part of whoſe Inhabitants, *ſedition* & *diſorders* are a certain advantage.

'Twere needleſs to mention the many places where *Toleration* even at preſent is granted, as well in *Popiſh* as *Proteſtant* Countryes, which ſhows all diſcourſes againſt its unpracticableneſs chimerical, & the idle whimſies of men's brains; nay, we that know that in *Holland*, & in many provinces of *Germany* (beſides ſeveral *plantations*, in the *Eaſt* & *Weſt Indies*, & a thouſand

other places) *Dissenters* are not only good *Subjects* & make the *publick interest* of the *Country* their *own*, but also after their playing the fool a while, they become tyr'd at last by being let alone, & then commonly conform themselves to the Religion of the Government under which they happen then to be.

Nor is this all for *Toleration* will convert several *Sects* from those abominable *opinions* as to *Obedience* which now they are thought tainted with; because whilst they secretly meet in by places what may not their Pastors infuse into them, & what will they not easily swallow, being discontented & troubled? On the other side, if their *Churches* be *publique* & allowed by *Authority*, we may all then not only truly know what is taught by them but also their *Congregations* (being enjoyned to give up in writing the *sum* of their *tenets*) will without *peradventure* soon conform to the due *obedience* mentioned; for 'tis certain to all mankind that things positively against the *Law of Nature* (as *Murther*, *Theft*, *Adultery*, *Liberty to kill Kings* when we please, & the like) will never be permitted by any *Power* in the world, & therefore the *Knaves*, or *Ringleaders* of our *Sectaries* (whose ambition & design is to draw people after them) dare not insist upon such *Doctrines*, as knowing it canot be so much as coniv'd at by his *Majesty*; & instead of being thought martyrs they are sure also to be deserted by their own *followers*, who will soon discover the cheat, when they find the *King* really *Indulgent* & *good natur'd* & shockt at nothing, but at that which is destructive & hurtful in it self: for as I said before, There's no *Body* of men truly *anarchical*.

This will cause them then at least to explicate the worst, & most seditious *Doctrines* so, that *Rebellion* must be own'd *unlawful*, & the *persons* of *Kings* esteemed *Sacred*; by which great numbers will be undeluded, & made faithful, seeing that publickly condemned by their own *Assembly* which now at best lyes *undetermined* & therefore may be asserted by the *Preacher* when he pleases. Moreover this enjoyning each *Congregation* to give in a *Confession* of their *Faith*, will certainly reduce all *Sectaries* to their wits; for thus they will be accustomed to stand to some *principles* or other, wheras now they have nothing *positive*, & consequently can hardly be confuted, the only aim of their *political & cunning teachers*.

If it be then *true protestant charity* not to damn *Christians* for *opinions* whilst they agree in the *main*, If moreover *Sects* are already so fixt, that they cannot be rooted out by force without destroying the Nation, and if *severity* blinds them that would otherwise see the truth, and makes them persevere in their errors, entailing also a hatred against the Government on most of the Posterity (which at present weakens and may for the future again undo us) where is the fruit of tormenting men for their *consciences*, unless it be to furnish our *Sectaries* (especially *papists*) with an unanswerable argument for any action committed whilst the power was in their hands.

But if *liberty* were granted if guilty men only suffer'd & not their *parties*, & if *dissenters* were capable of favour & trust, all people would joyn in the maintenance of the Goverment, *Delinquents* might be punish'd to the satisfaction of

the rest also the designes of all dangerous Miscreants would be wholly frustrated; & in that consists the only possibility of new troubles. Nor can *Dissenters* by *Liberty* of *Conscience* have any pretence in the least to *Bishopricks*, *Deanries*, or our other present *Ecclesiastical preferments*, more than to any mans private lands; because they never contributed to them, & therefore the *King* (had he no other title) must dispose of them, being ever *heir* where there is none; & to how many men of parts & learning, our famous *Monarchs* have still from time to time since the *Reformation* bestowed them, no *English man* can I am sure be ignorant. What *Sectaries* give of their own for the maintenance of their Pastors, in *Gods* name let them have it, & as for the claim of Papists to the *Premisses* we need not fear it, though our Ancestors of that perswasion were the Benefactors; for they that got the *Pope* in *Q. Maries* time (for the quiet of the Kingdom to conform the *Act of Parliament* that sold *Abby lands* (which makes our title to them unquestionable upon all accounts whatsoever) will without doubt in consideration of *Indulgence* do again the like, should any man be so scrupulous as to desire their release to that little which is still left the *Church*.

No benefit can there be to invent new *Sects*, or to continue them, because *Liberty* to do as they please will quite cool (as I said) the *zeal* of men delighted with novelties, nor shall the persons of many now amongst us be admired, who under pretence of suffering for *God*, devour Widdows & Orphans, & by degrees become the ruine both of *Church* & *State*.

How great & strong therefore must the *Church* of *England* grow by this *Indulgence*, when 'twil be no advantage for Deceivers (that now daily rage) to rob her of her children, & what shall hinder the sheep that went astray to return when they find neither pleasure nor profit in their folly? Nor shall we then (to the present wonder of mankind be always *consulting about Religion*, as our very *Gramer* has it; nor will our *Parliaments* be longer troubled with the insolencies of *Papists* & *Phanatiques*, which has been the common artifice to divert sober motions, when they ran counter to the private interest of a few. Having thus stated each party's *principles* & *case* as ful as I could (& really believing *Toleration* will so settle us in our *spiritual* & *temporal* concerns, that in a trice neither of them will have any considerable enemies left) now defie our *Dissenters* themselves to prevent their own ruine, though I have discover'd every thing, & show'd them the very *trap* and *pitfall*.

All that their *Leaders* can (I am sure) do, is (as some have already done) to *hinder* underhand that *Indulgence* which they seem so earnestly to desire; for they are sensible enough (as I mention'd) that they will hereby not only loose the present benefit they make of their *followers* (who in peace will soon be weary of them) but also that all their rebellious designs must be frustrated, as being never able to perswade them to fight the *battails* of the *Lord* or in plain English to *rebell*, that already enjoy what they hope for by the danger: & besides all these true reasons, (*viz.*) it self cast's something into the *Ballance* (for if *the righteous man be merciful to his beast*, much more ought we so to be poor well-meaning

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